

**THE CUMBRIAN SCHOOLS FORUM**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON**  
**12 DECEMBER 2005**

**PRESENT**

**Mr A Abernethy (Carlisle Secondary)**  
**Mr R T Alston (Foundation Secondary)**  
**Mrs N Bates (Advisory Group on Governance – Observer)**  
**Mrs J Blacklock (Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools)**  
**Mr S Bowditch (Special Schools)**  
**Mr C Brooksbank (Foundation Primary)**  
**Mr A Bryant (Cumbria Governors Council – Observer)**  
**Mr P Chappelhow (Cabinet Member, Children’s Services – Observer)**  
**Mr C Clarke (South Lakeland Secondary)**  
**Mr R Coy (VA Cof E – representing Mr J Douglas)**  
**Mrs T Eyre (Copeland Primary)**  
**Mr C Kirkup (Eden Secondary – representing Mr T Hobson)**  
**Mrs L Moffatt (Barrow Secondary)**  
**Mr R Rogers (Eden Primary)**  
**Mr A Rutter (Teachers’ Professional Associations)**  
**Mrs H Sargeson (Community and VC Controlled Secondary)**  
**Mr B Thomas (CEYDCP)**  
**Mr E Tumelty (VA Catholic)**

**Officers in attendance:**

**Mr A Hodge (Education Finance)**  
**Mr D Johnston (Education)**  
**Mr H Slater (Education)**  
**Mrs N Shiels (Education)**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from:-

Mr A Dickenson (represented by Mrs L Moffatt)  
Mr J Douglas (represented by Mr R Coy)  
Ms J Farebrother  
Mr S Halfpenny  
Mr T Hobson (represented by Mr C Kirkup)  
Canon D Jenkins  
Mr K Little  
Mr C Rafferty  
Mr M Woodburn

## **2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 NOVEMBER 2005**

Subject to an amendment to the proposal by the Schools' Budgets Working Group on page three, to include the date until when the Special schools would continue to be funded in accordance with the existing formula, the minutes of the meeting of the Schools' Forum held on 9 November 2005 were agreed as an accurate record.

## **3. MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

## **4. PRESENTATION - WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDED FORMULA**

At the meeting of the Schools' Forum held on 9 November 2005 a report had been presented by the Chair of the Schools' Budgets Working Group on the work that the group had undertaken to review the formula for funding schools.

The Forum had been asked to consider the work done by the group, to date, and:

- Receive the proposed reviewed formula as set out in appendix 5 of the report (dated 9 November 2005) and recommend that schools be consulted on the amendments.
- Recommend that the Working Group keep under continuous review the factors (Areas for further review) as set out in appendix 3 to the reports.
- Recommend that special schools continue to be funded in accordance with the existing formula until 31 March 2008.

There had been extensive discussion about the work that had been undertaken which, on the whole, was felt to have been a valuable exercise that should not be disregarded. However, there had been many concerns about moving towards a revised formula without having a proper understanding of the proposals and how they differed from the current formula. The members of the Budget group had spent a great deal of time working through the process and, as a result, had a clear understanding of the proposed changes. The Forum as a whole felt that they needed a similar level of understanding to enable them to properly explain to, and represent their constituents as well as make an informed decision.

It had therefore agreed that there should be an additional meeting of the School Forum on Monday, 12 December 2005 at 4.30pm. The main agenda item would be to receive a presentation by officers on the work that had been undertaken by the Working Group. It was hoped that this would help to inform the Forum, in more detail, about the basis of the proposed formula.

The presentation outlined the process that the Working Group had gone through to arrive at their proposal and explained in more detail some of the criteria on which the proposals had been based. The meeting also allowed an opportunity for officers to provide an update regarding the proposed 2006-08 settlement. The latest information had just been received from DfES in the last few days.

A copy of the presentation is attached as an appendix to the minutes.

There followed another lengthy debate, during which, many points that had been in previous discussions were reiterated. This was a proposed model to allocate funding to

schools that would also provide a basis for continued discussions and debate during the period 2006-08. The Minimum Funding Guarantee was also available help to ensure that schools received a similar level of funding, as at present, over the next few years. During this time, continued discussions may determine that the current proposals were inappropriate. However, there was a view that the proposed formula was better than that currently in place as it would be easier to justify.

Secondary representatives were still concerned that the model did not reflect how a secondary school worked in practice, especially relating to the complexity of delivering a specialist curriculum. Primary colleagues, however, were concerned that the implications of 'no change' would result in some schools finding it difficult to meet their statutory obligations, particularly relating to the implementation of workforce reform. It was suggested that further work could be undertaken regarding curriculum provision and, in particular, the delivery of a statutory minimum entitlement. Secondary colleagues welcomed the proposal.

The Chair felt that the presentation and further discussion had been useful and that the debate had moved forward. There was now an acceptance of the need for a revised formula but that the proposals should be investigated further.

The Forum were then asked to determine whether they felt that it was appropriate to consult with schools regarding the proposals. The timescale would be to seek the views of schools and report back to the next meeting of the Schools' Forum in January 2006. The general view was that the timescale was too short.

In view of this, some further work would be carried out to identify particular pressures within the sectors. The outcomes would be reported back to Schools' Forum members at a future meeting.

The Schools' Budget Working Group would continue their work, with a commitment from secondary colleagues that there would be better secondary representation at future meetings of the group.

## **5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- i) Review of CCC Telephone System – It was reported that Agilisys were looking to review the CCC telephone system. As part of the process, they had indicated that they would like schools (those with featurenet) to be involved in the discussions. Members were invited to take part in the discussions if they wished. A copy of the e-mail that briefly set out the proposal would be circulated to Forum members.
- ii) Performance Related Pay – Grants – This would be an item for consideration by the Forum on 11 January 2006.
- iii) Retiring Chair – Roger Alston had been Chair of the Forum from January 2003 but would be leaving his post as Headteacher of William Howard School at the end of the Autumn term, this would be his last meeting as chair of the Forum. The Vice-Chair was joined by the other members of the Forum in expressing thanks to Roger for his leadership of the Forum over that last few years. He had taken the Forum forward and it was felt the Cumbria's Forum was ahead of many others as a result of this leadership.